



INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Ben Hamoo Miriam¹

PhD Student,
Institute of International Relations of Moldova (IRIM),
Moldova

Abstract:

The global community has a responsibility to help with providing housing, clothing and food for refugee children, but there is also a moral responsibility to use education to help them build a better future. Many see education as the only effective way for integration, and they are right because integration works best in educating young refugee populations. However, although in some countries refugee children can attend school as any other non-refugee child, in other European countries they are not completely included in the national education system. This article will try to focus on some countries which already created a mechanism that integrate the children in the educational system.

Keywords: integration, immigration, educational system

1. Introduction

The process of integrating refugees into national education systems is a political, economic, and social challenge which is why the global community should support the teachers and Ministries of Education who will eventually be responsible for executing this integration. Integrating immigrants into national education systems means stability for the children. If they want to have a stable future, they, as any other child in that system, need to have trained teachers, a well-developed curriculum that will build their skills and knowledge, and the possibility of certifying their learning. They cannot achieve that outside of the system [Dryden-Peterson]. Being included physically in national schools is very important, but it is merely an initial step. The following step and yet another challenge that refugee children also be socially included. The opinion of Hunt [Hunt, 2011], for refugee children, schools are the most important place of contact with members of local host communities, playing an important role in establishing relationships supportive of integration. Still, there are a number of barriers hindering their successful integration into the education system. Many refugee children suffer

¹ Correspondence: email miribh2@gmail.com

both physical and emotional bullying in schools, racism, difficulties in making friends etc. when in fact they should be experiencing belonging and connection in order to learn.

2. Materials

Immigration has been in the past and will be in the future a main feature of the world societies and social structures. The education integration of migrants has become a key element in the system integration of all world societies. Using or not using the potentials that immigration entails will also have a strong influence on the competitiveness of developed countries in the world. The topic of education and migration will thus be relevant in the context of economic development, social cohesion and the stabilization of democratic cultures. Education plays a crucial role in helping migrants and refugees settle in new countries and environments [Hunt, 2016].

According to Grooger & Hanson [Grooger & Hanson], two of the strategic leaders in the Danish educational system, there is some challenges for integrate the immigrate students into the education systems:

2.1 Educational discrimination

Not all immigrants have an equal chance at educational success once they arrive in Denmark simply by virtue of their schooling backgrounds. Immigrants from extremely poor families, rural areas, or highly unstable regions may have only seen the inside of a classroom for a few weeks if at all. In contrast, some immigrants come from countries with very high standards of education and are thus in some cases farther ahead in some subjects than their Danish counterparts. In addition, prosperous New Danes have been able to send great sums of money home to their families and, when their children immigrate due to family reunification, these youths can meet Danish educational standards due to the funds they have received from their family member(s) living in Denmark [Moser & Evona].

2.2 Racism

Racism also plays a role in which immigrants receive which kind of education. For example, statistics from a 2016 educational report conducted by the Danish *Amternes og Kommunernes Forskiningsinstitut* [Danish Government] show that youth from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe enjoy almost identical educational opportunities as do Old Danes. However, of the large population of young Turks, only 20% have access to vocational education, a crucial steppingstone to success within the labor market. There is little evidence that educational standards are very divergent in these two areas and citing cultural differences can hardly account for this vast educational opportunity discrepancy.

2.3 Socio-cultural differences

Another more clear-cut reason why New Danes have a tougher time in the educational system than do Old Danes is because of comparative lack of parental guidance and social legacy, according to an August of 2015 report by the *Amternes og Kommunernes Forskiningsinstitut* (AKF). Old Danes are more likely to come from families where graduation from gymnasium and a university degree are expectations, not simply long-shot possibilities [Danish Government]. As with immigrants in every country, Danish immigrant families are less likely to keep significant stockpiles of Danish newspapers, books and other publications around the house, thus making it less likely that young children will pick up reading and other educationally enhancing techniques as Old Danes. New Dane families also in general have many more problems to deal with than do Old Danes, such as finding jobs in a discriminatory workplace, attaining adequate housing, maintaining contacts and cultural practices from the country of origin, etc. A New Dane teenager is more likely to have to work longer hours in a week in order to help her/his family attain economic stability than will an established Old Dane.

2.4 Lack of language skills and social interaction

Command of the Danish language seems to have a marked effect on educational opportunity. Younger immigrant children are usually able to pick up Danish more quickly and are thus more speedily integrated into Danish schools and society [Mouritsen]. However, older teenagers who know no Danish upon arrival face much greater challenges, especially if their parents expect them to immediately join the labor force. In addition, children from conservative families are routinely discouraged from interacting with their Old Danish peers outside of school and in general tend to pursue different leisure activities, a form of ostracism that is aided by the discrimination many New Danes face from teachers and other students while at school asserts an AKF study published in April 2017. This lack of interaction in Danish social life not only slows language acquisition but also inhibits the development of friendships and bonds of understanding between New and Old Danes. Old Danes are just as cheated by their lack of interaction with New Danes, for such segregation makes it more likely that they will harbor discriminatory attitudes towards the new arrivals and they will also have no chance to learn from the varied perspective and experiences that are such a valuable contribution that New Danes can make to Danish society. [Grand & Szulkin].

2.5 The American model for integrate the immigrate children

According to Harris [Harris], in her research *"Growing Up American: The Challenge Confronting Immigrant Children and Children of Immigrants"*, The phenomenal increase in contemporary immigration to the United States has given rise to a record number of children who, regardless of place of birth, are raised in immigrant families. Since the 1990s, a new generation of immigrant children and children of immigrants has become the fastest growing and the most ethnically diverse segment of America's child population. The 2000 US Census has revealed that about 15% of all children in the United States are immigrant children or children of immigrant parentage, and that 59%

of Latino-American children and 90% of Asian American children are members of the first or second generation, compared to 6% of non-Latino African-American children and 5% of non-Latino European-American children. Differing from their immigrant parents, immigrant children and children of immigrants lack meaningful connections to their “old” world. They are thus unlikely to consider a foreign country as a place to return to or as a point of reference. They instead are prone to evaluate themselves or to be evaluated by others by the standards of their new country. Given the fact that children of contemporary immigrants will represent a crucial component of future American society, how the state should understand these children’s adaptation to their role as citizens and full participants in American society?

2.6 The background of the policy and the model

All children in the United States are entitled to equal access to a public elementary and secondary education, regardless of their or their parents' actual or perceived national origin, citizenship, or immigration status. This includes recently arrived unaccompanied children, who are in immigration proceedings while residing in local communities with a parent, family member, or other appropriate adult sponsor. Under the law, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is required to care for unaccompanied children apprehended while crossing the border [Goldin]. While in care at an HHS shelter, such children are not enrolled in local schools but do receive educational services and other care from providers who run HHS shelters.

Recently arrived unaccompanied children are later released from federal custody to an appropriate sponsor – usually a parent, relative, or family friend – who can safely and appropriately care for them while their immigration cases proceed. Up to the American Policy [Neymotin], while residing with a sponsor, these children have a right under federal law to enroll in public elementary and secondary schools in their local communities and to benefit from educational services, as do all children in the U.S. The Existing Resources that may be helpful to communities enrolling immigrant children, including newly arrived immigrant children, include:

- Services for Educationally Disadvantaged Children: Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) provides funds to raise the achievement of children who attend high-poverty schools.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): IDEA funds may be used by LEAs to evaluate children of any background who are suspected of having a disability under IDEA. Once a child is found to be a child with a disability under IDEA, the funds may be used to provide special education and related services to the child consistent with the child's individualized education program and subject to IDEA's notice and consent provisions.
- English Language Acquisition Programs: States are required to set aside up to 15 % of their Title III funds under the ESEA for subgrants to LEAs that have experienced a significant increase in immigrant students. Such funds can be used for a broad range of activities including improving instruction, providing tutoring and intensified instruction, and conducting community participation

programs. Such funds may be used to serve newly arrived immigrant children regardless of whether such children are English Learners.

- **McKinney-Vento Act [McKinney-Vento]:** The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act delineates educational rights and support for children and youth experiencing homelessness, including guaranteeing immediate access to a free, appropriate public education. Federal law identifies a number of living arrangements such as sharing the housing of others, in which inhabitants would qualify for purposes of the Act. Under McKinney-Vento, school districts must appoint a local liaison to ensure, among other things, that;
 1. children and youth eligible under McKinney Vento are identified.
 2. that they immediately enroll in and have a full and equal opportunity to succeed in, the schools of the district.
 3. they receive educational services for which they are eligible, and referrals to health care services, dental services, mental health services, and other appropriate services.
- **Migrant Education Programs (MEP):** MEP funds are awarded to States under the authority of the ESEA. The MEP provides educational and supportive services to children who are migratory agricultural workers or fishers or who move with a parent or guardian who is a migratory agricultural worker or fisher. Newly arrived immigrant children may qualify as eligible migratory children on a case by case basis provided they meet the program requirements and fit the program specific definition of migratory child.
- **National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition:** This Clearinghouse provides non-monetary assistance in research-based strategies and approaches such as academic language development and can also share data and models for the creation of Newcomer Centers to serve recently arrived immigrant students and English language learners.

According to model - plan, the author of the thesis identifies three resources which include in the American Government's reference to the model of education of an immigrant child:

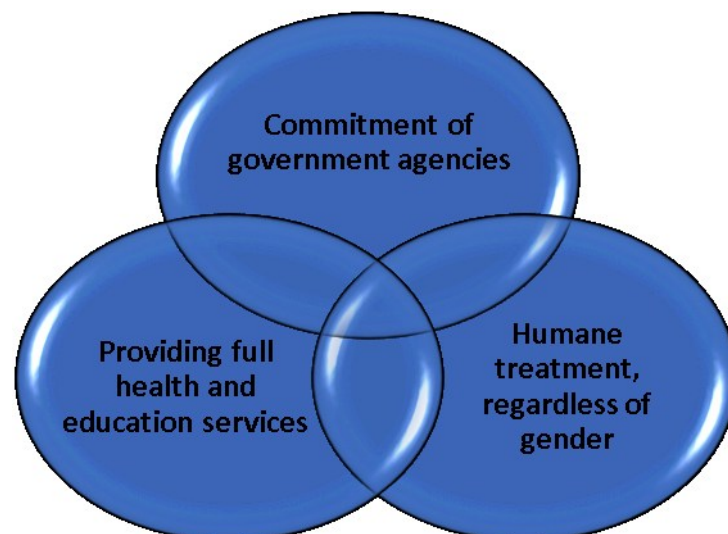


Diagram 1: The American Model of Educational Integration with immigrant children

3. Conclusion

Together with social and employment policies, educational policies are a meaningful tool for constructing integrated and cohesive societies. Education is a public good and a human right. Access to inclusive, equitable and good quality educational opportunities and assistance for all learners of any age needs to be ensured. Indeed, they are a precondition for social inclusion and protection, full participation in social and civic spheres of life, long term integration into the labour market and prevention of exploitation. However, according to UNESCO, refugee children and adolescents across the globe are five times more likely to be out of school than their non-refugee peers. The right to education regardless of the migration or residence status is explicit in legal systems of only ten EU Member States in spite of the fact that discrimination in access to services, protection and justice disrupts the integration process. It is vital that it is applied consistently throughout the EU. These standards cover access to accommodation, food, healthcare, education and employment, as well as medical and psychological care. Refugees are coming to Europe mentally and physically burdened; often traumatized. Multi-professional teams (interpreters, school nurses, educators, psychologists, social workers and teachers) are needed at initial reception centers and educational institutions to support them and continuously observe their progress. Integration guides and interpreters should accompany children and their parents when entering the school community.

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